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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oklahoma To Receive \$12-Million Education Grant

Washington, D.C. --

Oklahoma will receive a \$12.5 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the Oklahoma House Congressional delegation announced today. A grant from the Reading First program will make funds available for approximately 50 districts and schools across the state of Oklahoma to ensure that all children can read at grade level or above by the end of the third grade.

"I want to congratulate Oklahoma's Congressional Delegation on its work and thank them for their support of Oklahoma's Reading First initiative. We are pleased to be able to bring this training opportunity to Oklahoma's educators as well as parents," said State Superintendent Sandy Garrett.

"This is great news for Oklahoma, especially with the financial challenges facing our schools," said Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) "The majority of this money is intended to go straight to the classroom so our kids will be better readers. That's the foundation for their education."

"One of the most exciting parts of this grant is the Reading Academies that will be established by the State Department of Education," said Congressman Frank Lucas (R-OK). "These academies will feature a comprehensive training program for principals, teachers, and parents - and I think we all can agree the more opportunities we have for parents and educators to work together, the more our children will succeed. This federal funding for our schoolchildren is wonderful news."

Congressman John Sullivan (R-OK) said, "Educational excellence in America's public schools should be a top priority for our Nation and teaching children to read is fundamental to the achievement of that goal. The epidemic of illiteracy shuts out too many of Oklahoma's children from the American dream. These new resources will be vital to ensuring our students get the best education possible."

Congressman Tom Cole (R-OK) said of the award, "The award of this grant to Oklahoma further gives our children the resources to learn to read at an early age. It gives

our teachers and parents the ability to pinpoint problems, evaluate progress and to do their job as educators in a more efficient, personal manner. An opportunity such as this is only beneficial. We look forward to seeing this grant used to greaten our children and thereby greatening the future of our state.”

Congressman Brad Carson (D-OK) said, “Although the primary funding source for our public education lies with the State government I have said before that the Federal government can provide resources to help alleviate the budget crunch being felt in Oklahoma's classrooms. I am proud to join with other members of the delegation to announce that \$12.5 million will be headed to Oklahoma to help fund vital education programs that otherwise would not receive the resources they so desperately need.”

Approximately \$10 million of the grant will be used to make subgrant awards to roughly 50 schools in Oklahoma’s eligible districts. These funds will be for reading programs for students in kindergarten through third grade. The subgrants will also provide professional development for Oklahoman teachers so that they can teach these reading programs effectively.

The first Oklahoma subgrant awards are scheduled to be distributed this spring. Oklahoma’s Reading First program has been approved for a six-year grant, over the course of which the state will receive approximately \$82 million.

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